

Nightmares

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Summary: He never has nightmares when she sleeps beside him.
(Contains httyd2 spoilers)

Nightmares

He wakes up in the middle of the night screaming for his father to run.

His tears are wet and hot and frantic and the back of his brain is still burning with images of Stoick's stiff body. It's times like these when Hiccup forgets how to breathe and for a moment he doesn't know if he wants to breathe at all.

It's been eight months. He shouldn't be having nightmares like this anymore. They've gotten worse. Gory scenes mingle with distant memories from when he actually had a father.

A four year old Hiccup jumps out at his dad with his arms spread open like wings. "Rar! I'm a dragon!" his tiny voice squeaks gleefully. A much younger, happier Stoick laughs heartily. There's an irreplaceable smile on his lips. "Hoho! Well there's only one way to deal with you, beasty!" He takes the small boy in his arms lifts him up, practically hitting his head on the ceiling. Hiccup is shrieking with laughter when it suddenly shifts pitch until it's nothing but a vicious hissing and the picture morphs into Toothless smoking at the mouth with thin, dilated pupils, and his dad is—his dad is—

He feels like he's drowning and his limbs are tangled in the sheets. He opens his eyes and the water that he thought was filling his head is actually tears splotching across freckled cheeks. He's thrashing and trying to escape what's already happened and he can't stop repeating the word "Dad".

She enters the room quietly. This isn't the first time she's seen Hiccup this way. Face contorted in pain, knuckles white, fingers curled into the blankets. Every time the image rips a small hole in her chest. Her footsteps are light as she makes her way to his bed. A

small hand flies to his back and she's trying her best to touch past the trauma inside his head.

He's biting down hard on the pillow when he feels a foreign hand on him and instinctively flinches to the touch.

"Sh-sh-sh," her voice is calm and quiet. The screaming has subsided but has been replaced with broken sobbing. His back shakes and trembles beneath her hand. She takes his shoulders and pulls him closer to her until he's crying into her breast.

"You're okay, I'm here," she whispers softly. "I'm here." She starts rocking him slowly back and forth and keeps telling him to breathe.

Hiccup is ripped from a fiery scene when he finds himself in Rapunzel's arms. Everything is dark and he can still feel his own chest heaving frantically and the tears won't stop, but the fire inside him starts to quell. Her rocking movements remind him of the waves of the ocean.

Rapunzel starts humming a soft song that Hiccup faintly recalls. He has only ever heard Rapunzel sing and he thinks that's why it calms him down. A song about a special meadow with grass and leaves and daisies. It makes him feel safe. He can feel himself float down into the reality of Rapunzel's arms.

She continues her song "an old song from her home that her father would sing to the birds. She can feel his breathing regulate and the tiny storm inside her own chest begins to still. She strokes his hair soothingly, making feather-light touches. Every few minutes he's overcome with another bout of sobbing, and she's jostling under his quaking form.

"I can't bring him back" he chokes after several minutes. "He's gone and I can't bring him back."

"I know," she murmurs. "I know. It's okay, Hiccup. You're alright. It'll be alright."

He remembers his father once telling Rapunzel she had a natural talent for healing. She had been wrapping a dragon's wounded wing, and he just gazed at her with this distinguished pride. A soft kind of smile that Hiccup hardly ever saw had crossed his lips. A large hand had clamped over her shoulder, the other falling over his son's. Hiccup and Rapunzel had exchanged tiny grins at the time, but now he could see it. His father was right. It was in Rapunzel's nature to heal, to care for others. To fix what's been broken.

Her face is buried in his hair and their breathing synchronizes in a slow steady rhythm. Neither is sure who falls asleep first, but eventually they rest into one another until sleep overtakes them.

He never has nightmares when she's sleeping beside him.

End
file.